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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Editors/News Directors
FROM: Mike Gabbard 547-7001 or 753-6001

GABBARD CALLS POLICE RADIO SITUATION "INTOLERABLE"

HONOLULU – MARCH 22, 2004 – SAYING THAT THE CITY HAS "TURNED A DEAF EAR FOR far too long," City Councilmember Mike Gabbard today introduced a resolution calling for an independent expert to find out what ails the Honolulu Police Department's troubled radio system and recommend fixes.

"Honolulu taxpayers have spent over \$40 million on this system since 1994 and we're still having problems," Gabbard said. "How many 'glitches' does it take to add up to a dead police officer? It is intolerable and inexcusable that we expect our police officers to put their lives on the line with equipment that is sub-par. The City Council has been holding informational briefings on this problem for years and what do we have to show for it? More down time, blackouts, dead zones, and interference. This isn't about pointing fingers or assigning blame, but if a single police officer goes down because his radio went down, then there'll be more than enough blame to go around."

Gabbard's resolution asks the City Auditor to hire an independent telecommunications expert to identify problems with the police department's 800 megahertz telecommunications system and recommend fixes. "We need an independent, outside expert to evaluate this system from top to bottom, inside-out. This isn't something a City Council committee or a financial audit can do," Gabbard said.

"City Council adopted a resolution in September (Resolution 03-70, CD1) asking the Auditor to conduct a performance audit to look at things like contract performance, spending and so forth, but our top priority needs to be fixing the system and protecting our officers' lives," Gabbard said.

"I'll be asking my colleagues on the Council to support my amendment to the Legislative Budget this year to include sufficient funds to allow for a thorough evaluation of HPD's radio system," Gabbard said. The Ewa, Kapolei, Wai'anae Councilmember said he would consult with City Auditor Les Tanaka for advice on how much the study would cost.

Gabbard said he acted after being contacted by Alex Garcia, Chair of the Oahu Chapter of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO). Garcia may be reached at 847-4676.

Copies of Resolution 04-94 are available from the City Clerk or by calling Gabbard's office at 547-7001.

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